

The Irish Question



The Irish Question



ROY L. SMITH

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WHY ANOTHER IRISH PAMPHLET?

There is no more persistent and troublesome problem in modern politics than the Irish Question. It will not down. Year after year various expedients fail and the columns of the daily press are filled with new stories of unrest. Commissions have investigated and reported. Travellers have raced through the island and come back to America to lecture and write upon the subject. All over America volunteer societies are raising money to finance some cause or other within the island. The country has been flooded with pamphlets and leaflets which seek to enlist sympathy for one or the other of the two sides of the question.

To the average man the whole case is so bewildering and the understanding so uncertain that he cannot tell you what it is all about. Terms like Sinn Fein, Ulster, Unionist, Home Rule, Act of Union, Nationalist, etc., are mingled with all manner of confusion in his mind. It is for the purpose of stating the issues so that the plain man of the street may get a bird's eye view of the whole case that this pamphlet has been prepared. It is an

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effort to answer the questions which he would like to ask about the Irish Question.

In a time when the sacred name of "Liberty" is being invoked in the interests of four and a half million of people, three million of whom are in revolt against the government under which they have lived for seven hundred years; when millions of dollars are being asked of American citizens for the purpose of setting up an independent government; when every effort should be made to promote rather than to jeopardize the pacific relations existing between the United States and Great Britain; when bitter and partisan sympathies are seeking to drive a wedge between the two great English speaking nations; at such a time it is highly important that the average citizen should know the fundamental facts concerning the whole controversy.

That the author has a strong personal bias in this discussion will be frankly admitted. That he has made an honest effort to report facts will appear as the pages follow. If any should differ with him it will either be to controvert the facts stated, or to challenge his interpretations thereof. No effort has been made to provide footnotes or cite authorities. The informed student will readily recognize the sources of material and others will

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not be interested. No claim is made for originality. No tour has ever been made of the island. The information here given is just that which is available to any student who wishes to read the material available in any good public library. Scrupulous pains have been taken, however, to read all the important contributions to the subject and the conclusions here offered are born out of extensive reading through a period of years, in which hundreds of books, pamphlets, magazine articles and comission reports have been carefully studied.

For several years the author had a strong sympathy for the so-called cause of "Irish Freedom." An ancient strain of Irish blood mingles in his veins. A Revolutionary ancestry that does not forget British oppression during the colonial days predisposed him to strong suspicions of British understanding of Ireland's aspirations for self government. The popular appeal of "oppression" found ready acceptance and strong sympathy. Because of ignorance concerning the terms appearing in the daily press a study was begun to secure an intelligent understanding of the newspaper reports. As the investigation proceeded the viewpoint shifted—at first slowly and then with precision and finally with conviction. The result is that the author now

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entertains a strong sympathy for the Ulster viewpoint and firmly believes that Sinn Fein has scant claim upon the generosity of America, regardless of our love for the sacred cause of liberty or our devotion to the somewhat dubious doctrine of "the self-determination of nations."

The material here presented was given on two different occasions from the pulpit of Simpson Methodist Church, Minneapolis, as a Sunday evening address and is here presented in printed form in response to an insistent appeal presented on the second occasion when hundreds of copies of the pamphlet were asked for.

ANCIENT IRELAND

With the beginning of the Christian era history gives small notice to the Irish people. Far separated from the continent they developed a life unentangled with continental wars or customs. Government followed the usual lines of family, clan and tribe with only an occasional prince maintaining rule over any extended territory. The life of the people was wild and savage, resembling in some part the robustness of the Germanic tribes but without producing outstanding leaders or organizers.

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It is extremely important to remember, if we are to appraise the issues of the Irish Question fairly, that Ireland never was united under the rule of a single king as a separate nation. This statement will be challenged by some historians and Sinn Fein sympathizers but Father McDonald, Professor of Theology in the great college for Irish Priests at Maynooth, admits in his book "Some Ethical Questions of Peace and War," that Ireland never was a nation "if unity of rule and independence are requisites of nationhood." When the "Irish Republic," therefore, claims succession to the ancient **Irish Nation** this fact is of the utmost significance.

The missionary zeal of the early Christian Church touched the island very early and its evangelization was swift and complete. So strong did the church in Ireland become that during the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries Irish missionaries went into far distant corners of the earth preaching the gospel. Some of the most heroic tales of early Christian missionaries are the stories of these intrepid Irish priests. Their contribution to the spread of the Christian faith during those centuries is not surpassed by that of any group of evangelists the Roman Church ever sent out.

At home the cultural life made remarkable pro-

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gress. A considerable literature in the ancient Gaelic tongue came into existence. Art developed rapidly, especially in the monasteries. Some of the illuminated texts which were executed by hand with primitive pens are the despair of modern artists who seek to imitate them. The writer recalls examining one such piece under a powerful magnifying glass. In perfection of technique and accuracy of detail this ancient piece, done with primitive tools, out-rivalled the finest steel engraving.

But for the intrigues of petty kings and princes, Ireland might have developed and maintained a civilization a century or more in advance of the continent. Saved from the devastating wars of the continent by her isolated position, she developed an exquisite culture but fell a prey to the feudal wars of her rival kings. Thus in the 10th century we find her cultural and religious life retrograding and her unhappy people sinking into a quagmire of ignorance and misery occasioned by the wild warfare and jealous rivalries of her contending factions. There is no more tragic page in European history than the one which records the decay of that noble civilization of ancient Ireland.

The first foreigner to invade Irish soil was the Norman in the 8th century. In 1171 the Danes

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invaded the land and Ireland appealed to England for help. In 1172 Pope Adrian IV, issued a papal Bull which was confirmed by his successor, Alexander III, authorizing Henry II, of England, to go to Ireland and "restore order." The Irish chiefs received the English king readily and the first real unified government was set up. In 1395 the Irish chiefs reaffirmed their submission and in 1541 a parliament met in Dublin which formally recognized Henry VIII as King of Ireland. In 1642 a Roman Catholic Confederation meeting in Kilkenny and representing all of Catholic Ireland, decreed that "All the inhabitants of Ireland and each of them shall be most faithful to our sovereign the King and his heirs and lawful successors." In 1689 the Patriot Parliament convened in Dublin and recognized James II as King of England and sovereign of Ireland. Whoever, therefore, claims that Great Britain has no rights in Ireland except those of the conqueror with the mailed fist will be under the necessity of explaining these facts.

It goes without saying that English rule has often been severe and tyrannical. But Sinn Fein will search vainly for abuses in Ireland which were not also endured in all other European countries during the same periods. As we read the story of

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the painful injustices suffered by the high-spirited Irish we must remember to judge the "tyrant" by the standards of his times, rather than by the enlightened and generous ethics of our own day. Severity, tyranny, injustice and oppression were the burdens under which the common people of all lands were groaning in those hard-handed centuries. Ireland was no exception, suffering with the rest of Europe, under a cruel political creed.

MODERN IRELAND

For the sake of convenience in the study of this problem we date the beginnings of modern Ireland with the plantation of James in 1609. The modern problem may be said to date from that event.

In 1601 two native princes of Ulster, O'Neill and O'Donnell, were seized with a desire to extend their sway over the south of Ireland and began an invasion. A Spanish army of 6000 men, co-operated by invading from the south. The two forces overran south Ireland and were only defeated by English troops despatched to the island for that purpose. The lands of O'Neill and O'Donnell in Ulster were forfeited to the crown. The country involved in this forfeiture was barren and unproductive and

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the life of the people, according to contemporary writers, was wretched and lawless. In fact the province of Ulster at this time was the most uninviting of all the island.

In 1603 James II of Scotland succeeded to the English throne, following Elizabeth, and united the English and Scotch under one crown. Along the border between the two countries there had been warfare for many years and the existing animosities constituted one of the serious obstacles to a complete unification of the two peoples. James conceived the brilliant scheme of transplanting these border folk to the confiscated Ulster lands, thus saving two bad situations. It was not the first time that English colonists had been sent to Ireland but in former cases the women were not sent along and the colonists, marrying Irish women, had been absorbed into the native population. James' plantation, however, included the entire population and the colonists intermarried among their own group thus retaining their individuality.

The plantation began in 1609 and continued for a number of years, the movement involving many thousands of people. The new inhabitants of Ulster were industrious and thrifty and the land soon became productive far beyond anything that it had

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ever known before. The native population, driven off their lands and seeing them producing abundantly under the management of the new proprietors naturally grew resentful. But to all appearances a fair spirit of cordiality existed.

Suddenly in 1641 a terrible massacre broke out. Two causes incited the natives to monstrous atrocities. The seizure of the land had long been a source of irritation but in addition the colonists were stubbornly Protestant and the natives were loyally Catholic. The massacre proceeded with the utmost fury and cruelty until a large proportion of the colonists had been slain. Dr. Mahoney, a Cork priest, published a statement in 1645 to the effect that 150,000 of the 250,000 Protestants had been killed. The truth is probably somewhat less though a few estimates run as high as 200,000. It was in this wholesale and fiendish massacre that the seeds of distrust were planted between the Ulstermen and the native Irish. Since that date the history of the land has been a tragic succession of riots, reprisals, massacres and murders. The hands of neither party are entirely clean. Nearly three centuries of guerilla warfare have fomented a distrust and suspicion that no "diplomatic" peace will ever entirely cure.

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In 1649 Cromwell landed at Dublin and began to put down the outlawry. He was undoubtedly severe but it was not a kid-glove generation. The native population was banished to the west of the Shannon and the lands were given to Cromwell's soldiery in payment for military services in this and previous campaigns. This act has been cited by Sinn Fein as typical of the tyranny of England but it was a method generally employed by European monarchs of that century when it suited their purpose. So effectively did Cromwell do his work that "The Curse o' Crummel" is still a hideous phrase among the native Irish.

Cromwell's soldiers were militarists and not farmers. They were glad, therefore, to sell their lands to English capitalists who thus came into possession of more than 2,000,000 acres of Irish lands. This saddled the curse of absentee landlordism upon Ulster and the evil spread to the entire island. Most of the soldiers returned to England or emigrated to America.

When civil war broke out in Ireland between James and William of Orange, two rival claimants to the English throne, Catholic Ireland supported James and Protestant Ireland supported William but the war was not a religious strife in its origin. The

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alignment of the two groups served to heighten the religious animosities, however, and aggravated the long-standing disagreements between them. It is interesting to note at this point that the now famous Irish color of green was first worn by the Protestant soldiers under William, the Catholic followers of James having taken the white. **The Protestant color has become the national symbol.**

In 1800 the Act of Union was passed by which England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales were united under one crown, becoming partners in the British government.. Authority was vested in a common parliament meeting in Westminster. From this time on it is a mistake to speak of "English" rule in Ireland. It is **British** rule in which the Irish people had a full representative voice.

According to the plan of Union there were two legislative bodies: the House of Lords corresponding roughly to the American Senate and the House of Commons corresponding more closely to the American House of Representatives. In 1919, under the Act of Union, Ireland had 105 representatives in the House of Commons, elected by her own votes. At the same time Scotland, with approximately the same population, had 75 representatives. The ratio of representation in Ireland was

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one to every 40,000 people and in England, one to every 73,000 people. When Ireland therefore complains that she had no voice in her own affairs England and Scotland reply that they would gladly exchange places with her.

Under the Union plan the four countries (England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales) maintained one Imperial treasury out of which the expenses of the Empire were paid. In 1817 the Empire assumed Ireland's national debt of 143,000,000 pounds sterling and since that time Ireland has never paid one cent of either principal or interest. The taxes collected have been paid into the Imperial treasury and apportionments for local and provincial needs have been taken from the common fund. Counties, towns and villages are allowed to fix their own local rates undisturbed by outside interference the Irish counties thus having absolute control over the matter of taxation for local purposes.

That Ireland has had a fair consideration in the collection and distribution of the Imperial funds will appear from the following figures. In 1918-19 England contributed \$3,455,310,000 to the Imperial treasury, Scotland \$486,605,000 and Ireland, with about the same population as Scotland, \$186,375,000. On the other hand England received back

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for her own local needs \$719,237,5000, Scotland \$97,637,500 and Ireland \$110,807,500. In other words, for the Imperial government, for the navy, the army, the diplomatic service and all the other benefits of the central government England paid \$2,736,072,500, Scotland \$388,970,000 and Ireland \$75,567,500. In addition, for the same year, Ireland received \$60,000,000 for various pensions, \$21,500,000 for a bread subsidy and \$5,000,000 for an "out of work" donation.

THE TWO IRELANDS

There are, as a matter of fact, two distinct Irelands. In the north stands Ulster, predominantly Protestant, the people being for the most part the descendans of the colonists of James' plantation. In south and west Ireland is the native population which is predominantly Catholic and which will be referred to for the sake of convenience hereafter as Catholic Ireland though many Protestants live within the area. One cannot understand the Irish problem unless one keeps in mind the differences between these two segments of the population.

Ulster contains about a million and a half of people while the other three counties (Muenster,

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Linster and Connaught) have a total of about three million. These two groups differ in religion, racial heritage, economic interests, personal characteristics and political views.

Ulster has all the racial heritage of the Scotch and English and is not, strictly speaking, Irish at all. The Ulstermen have the haunting memory of centuries of ruffianism practised upon them by their native neighbors and they look with grave concern upon the formation of any secret society that may develop marauding tendencies. The rest of Ireland looks upon Ulstermen as invaders who have stolen the lands of the natives. In 1793 Dr. Duigenan, a prominent writer born of a Catholic family, wrote, "The Irish Catholics to a man esteem all Protestants as usurpers of their estates. To this day they settle those estates on the marriage of their sons and daughters. They have accurate maps of them. They have lately published in Dublin a map of the Kingdom cantoned out among the old proprietors. They abhor all Protestants and all Englishmen as plunderers and oppressors, exclusive of their detestation of them as heretics. — — — The Protestants of Ireland are but the British garrison in an enemy's country,

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and if deserted by the parent state must surrender at once."

In their economic interests there is an equally wide difference. Ulster is the manufacturing district of the island. The five greatest industries of the island are grouped about Belfast. The large-scale industries of the entire island are concentrated in Ulster. The agricultural life is still hindered by the unresponsive soil. Catholic Ireland, on the other hand, is mainly agricultural. Dairying and farming provide the basis of the economic life of the people. The result is that the great financial interests of the island are centered in Belfast and the two sections present a different type of worker with a different mode of thought. Ulster tends to be cosmopolitan and Catholic Ireland tends to be isolated.

During the war Ulster manufactured 90% of all the airplane cloth used by all the allies and 10% of the new allied shipping was built in Ulster yards. Ulster does business with the entire world through her various industries while 95% of the marketed produce of Catholic Ireland is bought by England.

The difference of economic life would naturally produce a difference in the thought life of the two Irelands. But the other differences of religion,

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etc., accentuate the cleavage. Ulster is loyal to the Union, Catholic Ireland is restive and bitter. Neither group is inclined to compromise. Sinn Fein, though not a religious movement in the first place, is almost exclusively a southern party, very few votes for the party candidates being cast in Ulster.

POLITICAL PARTIES

The surly temper of the Irish and their impatience of British rule has been the cause of endless enxiety to the Empire. Many conferences have been held with leaders of various groups in an effort to work out some system of government in Ireland which will be satisfactory to the Irish themselves and consistent with British honor and dignity. The various plans advocated have given rise to political parties, each proposing a different scheme of government.

The **Unionists** are mostly Ulstermen, well satisfied with the Act of Union and opposed to any radical change. They are happy under the present arrangement and will not consent to any measure that severs their connection with the Empire. They have a fear of any partnership government which they will be compelled to share with Catholic

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Ireland. Such a partnership government would find them outvoted two to one and the accumulated distrust of the last three hundred years makes them very averse to setting up housekeeping with their insular neighbors unless they are given absolute guarantees which have not yet been satisfactorily devised.

The **Nationalists** have been working for a Home Rule government for several decades. This is a Catholic party, composed of the native Irish who have a strong national spirit. Since the rise of Sinn Fein with its more radical program of complete independence the Nationalists have lost a large part of their support and are now a comparatively helpless minority. At this point, for the sake of an understanding of Home Rule, it will be well to differentiate between the position of Ireland under the Union and as a Dominion. Under the Union she has a free voice in the fixing of the national policy with her representatives sitting in the national legislative body clothed with full representative powers. Under a dominion she would maintain something of the status of a territory in the American plan but with complete local powers respecting her domestic affairs. There would be some gain in the administration of purely local

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matters but there would be a distinct loss in her prestige in national policies. Home rule would mean much the same as a dominion government.

Sinn Fein has had a peculiar history. In 1902 Arthur Griffith, a clever young Dublin journalist, wrote a book on "The Resurrection of Hungary" in which he emphasized the values of "self-reliance" in raising that nation in its economic and political importance. Some years before, a revival of interest in the ancient Gaelic tongue had swept through the island and many clubs were studying the ancient culture and literature much as we have "Shakespeare" or "Browning" clubs in America. At first it was a harmless diversion without religious or political significance. The government figures for 1900 showed that less than 20,000 people of the Island used the ancient language as their everyday speech and the government itself lent much encouragement to the interest in the ancient Irish. Griffith's treatise on Hungary tended to give the reviving nationalism a political significance and the new party took the name "Sinn Fein" which means "Ourselves alone" or "Self-reliance." The emphasis upon the national spirit soon attracted the intense patriots and political radicals. Up to 1914 the party did not have great voting strength but seizing

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upon a wide-spread dissatisfaction with the war, and aided by the priesthood who led the people in their opposition to conscription, Sinn Fein raised the standard of revolt and came into political power. It is now the dominant party in Catholic Ireland, the old Nationalist group having temporarily lost their following.

In the main Sinn Fein contends for a complete separation of all Ireland from the Union with an absolutely independent government. They are opposed to any partition of the island contending for a government that will include both Protestant and Catholic Ireland. Sweeping the elections of 1916 Sinn Fein refused to allow any of her delegates to take their seats in the House of Commons and, when invited by Britain to a parley for the discussion of the problem, refused to attend even a Dublin conference of Irish delegates. The Irish Republic is the creation of the Sinn Fein group and is presided by Edmund De Valera, one time college professor and a prominent leader of the Sinn Feiners. It is interesting to note that St. Patrick, the Irish patron saint was not an Irishman but a Scotchman, that the Irish color of green is the ancient Protestant color of William of Orange and

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that the president of the "Irish Republic" is one with a strong Spanish ancestry.

HOME RULE AND CONSCRIPTION

Previous to 1914 the agitation in Ireland had been for Home Rule. Sir John Redmond, the outstanding leader of the Nationalists, gave a lifetime to the effort. In 1914 victory had seemed almost within his grasp. The Home Rule Bill had been passed by Parliament and the government was preparing the machinery to put it into operation. Ulster was defiant and refused to accept Home Rule, even training soldiers to resist with force if necessary. Then the war broke. Britain could not afford mutiny at home with her very life at stake at the front. She therefore decided to delay the enforcement of Home Rule until after the war. This delay infuriated Catholic Ireland and gave color to Sinn Fein's demands. The position of the government was exceedingly difficult.

The first call to the colors saw young Catholic Ireland marching briskly away to war with young Protestant Ireland. Some of the finest service the crown enjoyed was rendered by these regiments from South Ireland. But the activity of Sinn Fein

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began to strike like a black damp and the recruiting fell to a mere trickle. Then Britain decided to apply conscription to the entire Empire, including Ireland, and thereat the Catholic Bishops met and denounced the measure and called upon the people to resist to the last. Again the government hesitated. Ulster was demanding that conscription be applied to the island as to the other members of the Empire and showed her good faith by sending as many volunteers into the army as she would have been asked to furnish under conscription. Catholic Ireland resisted and the conscription order was not enforced. In fact the Easter Rebellion, an ill-advised mutiny involving a comparatively small force, together with other open defiance of the officials resulted in the withdrawal of thousands of troops from the front for the purpose of keeping order in the island. The net result was that Ulster furnished 75,000 men for the army and Catholic Ireland with twice the numbers, furnished 70,000.

The record of Sinn Fein is further clouded by such incidents as that of Sir Roger Casement. The German government had counted upon rebellion in Ireland as one of her aids in a speedy victory. The rebellion did not materialize in time but a ship-

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load of arms in a German vessel manned by a German crew was caught off the Irish coast as it was seeking to deliver the supplies to Irish rebels. A short time after Sir Roger Casement, an intermediary between the Irish and the Germans, was taken off a German submarine as he was returning to Ireland from Germany. Executed by the government as a traitor he became a martyr to his people and his death was probably a tactical blunder. Admiral Sims of the American Navy has repeatedly assured the American public that Sinn Fein activities were a serious embarrassment to the British-American navies in their campaign against the submarines. The sympathy of Sinn Fein for the German cause is not even seriously denied.

BRITAIN'S SINS

No one who is at all familiar with British rule in Ireland will undertake to defend all her administration of the island's affairs. Her judgment and good faith are under grave suspicion in many instances. But at least she is entitled to a hearing on the basis of the efforts that have been made to settle the dispute during the last twenty-five years. Furthermore, simple justice demands that she be

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judged according to the highest standards of the times in which the injustices have been perpetrated. On the other hand the turbulency of the people, the continued succession of Night Riders, Molly Maguires, and a score of other manifestations of terrorism give some justification for severe and retaliatory measures.

Overtaxation is one of the charges made against British dominion. We have already seen how much Ireland contributed to the Imperial government in comparison with the other members of the Union. No section prospered by the war any more than Ireland for above everything else England wanted food and Ireland's supplies at close hand brought a good price. Her funds in savings banks mounted quickly from \$356,000,000 in 1913 to \$764,000,000 in 1919. The Irish farmer is not a speculator but puts his savings in banks where he thinks they are safe. Yet British bonds were freely bought in Ireland during the early days of the war and considerable sums are today invested in British securities.

The Land System in Ireland was particularly vicious during the first half of the last century. Vast estates were controlled by English landlords who leased the lands to the Irish peasants at bur-

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densome rates. Furthermore the farmer had no protection against a raise in rates or eviction. The most industrious and thrifty farmer found himself helpless because there was no land he could buy and no protection when he rented. Poverty, land-slavery and backward methods of agriculture were the inevitable results.

In an effort to correct this abuse the Imperial government compelled the landlords to sell their lands at reasonable rates and the government offered the Irish peasant farmer the capital with which to make the purchase. He was permitted to repay the government at the rate of three and a quarter per cent per year, this payment wiping out principal and interest in the space of seventy years. By this system more than seventy-five percent of the agricultural land of Ireland is now in the hands of the farmers and the British government has expended \$750,000,000 in the enterprise. By the same generous plan some 50,000 to 60,000 cottages have been built for Irish laborers. These dwellings are neat, four roomed, stone buildings with slate roofs with about an acre or a half of ground attached. For these dwellings the Irish laborer pays a weekly rental of thirty to thirty-six cents per week. This is less than the price of a dish of

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prunes in many an American restaurant! Yet this rental will repay the government both principal and interest in less than fifty years after which the laborer owns his cottage.

England, Scotland or Wales would gladly accept such a generous land system as now prevails in Ireland and three-fourth of the people of Europe look with envy upon the good fortune of the Irish in this regard.

Depopulation is a favorite charge against British rule. In 1800 at the time of the act of Union, Ireland's population was 4,000,000 which rose to 8,000,000 by 1846 and now stands at 4,500,000. Sinn Fein says this loss is due to Britain's oppressive policy. But it was during the first fifty years of Union that we see the rapid growth. Indeed, the very harshness of which Sinn Fein complains most bitterly was incident to those very years. The Union can hardly be the cause of this loss, therefore. There must be other causes.

In 1846 the potato crop utterly failed and a second failure followed in the next year. The potato was almost the exclusive crop and the land had become devitalized through improvident methods. The population was reduced to immediate starvation and no government could have averted the disaster.

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Thousands starved to death. Other thousands emigrated, many of them coming to America. This was the first time that any considerable immigration had come to America from Catholic Ireland. Up to this time the Irish immigrants were Ulstermen who came to escape the incessant turmoil or to improve their economic condition. Once that Catholic emigration started it developed into a veritable tide. About this time an industrial revolution was going on in the rest of the world in which the use of steam and steel played a great part. Agricultural Ireland took small part in this industrial development and the enterprising individuals emigrated. Weakened by the potato famine and having no industrial interests the Irish people have not multiplied as have other groups. The reader may judge for himself the extent of English responsibility for Ireland's depopulation.

The development of Irish Culture is a perfectly worthy ambition with which the British government has never interfered. Indeed the Imperial government has spent more than a million dollars in the last forty years in the development of the ancient Gaelic. Yet Sinn Fein complains that Britain has attempted to stamp out the old Irish culture. In 1869 the Episcopal Church was dis-

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established in Ireland and the people have been free to pursue their own worship untrammelled for more than fifty years. The great National University, with colleges at Dublin, Cork, and Galway which holds its charter from the government and has been liberally subsidized from the same source, makes the Irish language an obligatory study. Dr. Douglas Hyde, the first president of the Gaelic League and now professor of Modern Irish in the National University writes, "The killing of the language took place under the eye of O'Connell and the Parliamentarians and of course under the eye and with the sanction of the Catholic priesthood and prelates. — — — From a complexity of causes — — the men who had the ear of the Irish race have persistently shown the cold shoulder to everything that was Irish and Racial."

Retarding the economic development of the country is another charge lodged against British rule. Sinn Fein asserts that Britain is interested in keeping Ireland economically dependent and to accomplish this has discriminated against her in the apportioning of benefits under the government. But Ireland today has a department of Agriculture which is largely administered by the Irish themselves and which spends considerable sums received

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from the Imperial treasury. This Department directs the whole agricultural and economic life of the people in a marked degree. The control of animal disease, the development of fisheries, the control of creameries, the marketing of produce and the improvement of live-stock are among its functions.

British interference in Irish industry may be well illustrated by the following story of the Irish fisheries. On the west coast of Ireland are large schools of fish but the Irish had never caught them for the market. In order to encourage the fishing business the government bought motor fishing boats and sold them to the Irish on the same generous plan used in providing farms and cottages. Piers were built for the landing of the boats and then, in order to get the fish to market in the quickest time, little narrow guage railways were built across the island. Fish can now be delivered to the Liverpool market within twenty-four hours from the time they leave the water. But the Irish were not trained fishermen. Scotchmen were therefore employed by the government to teach the Irish to fish—one Scotchman in a boat with five Irishmen. As soon as the Irish were proficient the Scotch were sent back to their own

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waters. This plan has added an entire new industry to Ireland's economic life and she is hundreds of thousands of dollars richer annually. **The British government assumed the cost of the experiment.**

Ireland is essentially an agricultural country, little or no mineral wealth being available. A little coal is mined near Kilkenny and the salt mines at Garrick-fergus are operated but the wealth of the land is in her manufacturing interests, her dairying and farming. Irland holds a monopoly on the export of live stock to England and her capital stock has increased from 3,000,000 to more than 5,000,000 during the past seventy-five years—during the very period when her population was decreasing.

Military police are never popular but to the Irish they are particularly offensive because they represent the authority of "the invader." But has Britain any reason for the maintenance of this Irish Constabulary? War times frequently demand war measures and during the last six or seven years the provocations have not been insignificant or isolated. The dubious loyalty of the Irish inclined the government to take no chance. Much severity was doubtless due to suspicion but England remembers that she has not had a foreign foe in three hundred

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years with which certain elements in the Irish population have not intrigued behind her back. With her very existence imperiled and fighting for her life England has shown commendable generosity. It is exceedingly doubtful if America has evidenced any such tolerance amid the exigencies of war.

Oppression is an ugly word that calls out much sympathy. When Ireland charges all her woes to **English oppression** she misleads many people. In the first place England is but one element in the Empire, sharing power with Scotland, Wales and Ireland. It is true, of course, that she is the most powerful of the group. But the laws enacted in Parliament have been written in the presence of Ireland's 105 representatives. Those very representatives have had as much power as any other group of the same number in that body. In many instances they have held the balance of power and have always shown great political shrewdness in bartering their power with various groups to secure beneficial legislation for Ireland. More than one domestic issue has been settled for England or Scotland by this group of Irish votes. If England is to be charged with having **dictated** to Ireland, then Ireland may be charged with having **meddled** in English affairs. In all local matters the Irish

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have had as much latitude as the other segments of the Empire. It is an interesting sidelight on the contentment and peace in Ireland to discover that the emigration in 1917 was the lowest in seventy-five years and even in 1913 before the war it stood at a very low figure.

BRITAIN'S ATONEMENT

As one reviews the almost paternal interest that Britain has taken in Irish affairs he is impressed with a program of reform that bears every evidence of sincerity. The land-reforms, the stimulation of industry, the subsidizing of the Irish laborer's economic development, the charity and patience toward her warring factions, the religious liberality and the encouragement of popular education constitute a record of which no Briton need be ashamed. In the reorganization of Ireland's government Britain has shown great consideration. Her present attitude is revealed in the remark of Lloyd George who declared that "Ireland can have any kind of government she wants so soon as she can decide what that is to be." And that is just the problem.

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ULSTER'S CASE

Reference has already been made to Ulster's dissatisfaction with any Home Rule government. She contends that any scheme which forces her into a partnership with Catholic Ireland is sentencing her to political tyranny and economic death. Any Irish government comprehending the entire island would find the Ulstermen outvoted almost two to one. In such a government the levying of taxes, the assignment of benefits, the control of the judiciary, the development of education and the encouragement of industry would rest in the hands of the majority. **Ulster has learned to distrust that majority** through three hundred years of ruffianism, night riding and terrorism. She declares that her loyalty to the crown during the years of danger and her faithful labors in the common cause during the late war entitle her to sympathetic consideration. If she is unduly suspicious of Catholic Ireland the three hundred years of necessitated vigilance are a fair explanation. If Catholic Ireland asks for independence on the basis of "self-determination" then Ulster will claim independence from the rest of the island on the same grounds. This is unsatisfactory to Catholic Ireland.

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In any government for Ireland Ulster is a necessity. Because of her superior industrial position she controls the financial interests of the island to a large degree. She pays more than fifty per cent of the Imperial taxes. Hers is the industrial initiative which must be relied upon to guarantee the success of an independent Ireland.

Protestant Ulster makes much of the danger of Rome's interference in the Irish government. This fear is heightened by religious prejudice for nowhere in the world do religious animosities strike deeper than in Ireland. Interference with local government is a common charge against the priesthood. Their part in fomenting revolt against conscription is amply proved. Ulster Protestants have shown marked ability in the development of their own industries, but religious intolerance which has denied them Catholic patronage has confined their activities to Protestant communities. The Home Rule bill of 1916 would have been applied to Ireland, exclusive of the six counties of Ulster except for the veto of the Catholic hierarchy which insisted upon its application to the entire island.

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AN INDEPENDENT IRELAND

Sinn Fein is crusading for an independent Ireland and has set up a paper government known as "The Irish Republic." This fantastic creation has exercised none of the functions of government except that of making war and raising money. The war has been made on the British military police and the money is being raised in America. Serious statesmen are asking if an Independent Ireland is a possibility, granting that Britain would consent to the secession.

In the first place such an independent Ireland could never hope to include Ulster. She would die resisting. An Irish Republic which did not include Ulster would be reduced to financial beggary from the start unless subsidized by British or financed by American charity. Such an independent nation would require an army, a navy, a judiciary, a strong consular service and a wide circle of alliances. The latter necessity would make her only another trouble maker in the chaotic sea of European diplomacy. A nation of three million people could hardly expect to exert much power in European diplomacy except as a pawn for am-

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bitious first-rate powers. In such a case she would be an easy prey for unscrupulous exploiters and intriguing diplomats. As an independent nation Ireland is viewed as exceedingly dangerous by many of the ablest European diplomats.

Ireland's profit by the scheme is dubious. The loss of Industrial Ulster would be a serious financial blow and the cost of her government would mount to soaring heights in comparison with present figures. Her markets would not be materially improved, her friends would not be increased and her enemies would be multiplied.

Ninety-five per cent of Catholic Ireland's export trade is with England. The setting up of an independent nation would raise barriers that would well nigh annihilate this trade. England, with her vast merchant marine could easily turn to other markets for her supplies but Ireland would be under the necessity of erecting an entire new piece of commercial machinery including credits, securities and trade relations. It would be an expensive and difficult business which might prove disastrous. England can afford the experiment but Ireland has everything to lose.

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THE PRESENT STATUS

Since the close of the war Great Britain has set herself determinedly to the task of finding some settlement of the case. To date the results have been discouraging. A separate parliament has been set up for Ulster under a plan somewhat resembling a dominion form of government. Catholic Ireland is still nominally under the Act of Union though the uprisings and riots have reduced the land to a state of chaos and military government. Various conferences have been held between the government leaders and the Irish representatives with no tangible results. The new parliament in Ulster is feeling its way and gradually getting a hold on the situation. The Irish Republic remains a government on paper only. The patience of the Empire is being taxed to the limit as the government proposals (generally viewed as generous in the extreme) are criticised on petty and technical grounds. The Irish representatives insist upon being treated as emissaries of an independent government in full operation and the British authorities refuse to treat with them except as beligerent leaders of Irish factions. In the meantime there is no general agreement among the people of Catholic Ireland

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as to policy and riots, murders, destruction of property and intimidations proceed. Both sides are becoming exceedingly weary of the purposeless turmoil.

AMERICA'S INTEREST IN THE IRISH CASE

It is significant that the Irish case is being pushed nowhere else as in America. This arises from the fact that America has a deep interest in the settlement of the dispute. Ten of thousands of Irishmen came to America following the potato famine and through them the Irish prejudices and sympathies have been transplanted to our soil. America having been the herald of a new day in political thinking has taken the sacred word of "liberty" very seriously. Any nation that can set up a claim to sympathy because she is fighting for liberty gets ready responses from American people.

Before Americans give endorsement to Irish claims, however, there should be the most careful weighing of evidence. Catholic Ireland is demanding American support for an "Independent Ireland," alleging that Ireland's help during the American Revolution assured success for the colonists. It is significant, however, that **the Irishmen who consti-**

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tuted 38% of Washington's victorious army were Ulstermen. The immigration from Catholic Ireland was almost negligible until about 1846 at the time of the potato famine. Since that time there has appeared in the east a series of political dictators of unsavory reputation whose leaders have been very largely recruited from these immigrants or their descendants. Ulster gave us soldiers for Washington's army while Catholic Ireland gave us Tammany!

As these pages go to the press the conference on disarmament is meeting in Washington to discuss practical means for reducing the probability of another war. If America endorses an independent Ireland she is helping to project a new nation into the already turbulent and chaotic sea of diplomacy and is thereby attacking the noble cause to which she has given such masterly leadership.

America has already offered serious offense to Britain by her attitude on the Irish question. Until America recognizes the Irish Republic as an independent, functioning government, the representatives of that paper government can have no legal standing except as mutineers. Regardless, therefore, of the personal sympathies of American public officials, they have no right to treat such individuals

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as honored diplomatic guests to be dined, feted and officially received. Yet that has happened in America repeatedly and only the tolerant good humor of Britain has saved us from serious complications because of this breach of international courtesy. Indeed, an impertinent resolution introduced into Congress calling for official investigation of the Irish case brought only a polite word from the English people, the gist of which was to the effect that "America should mind her own business."

A parallel case exists in American politics which will help us get the British viewpoint. A certain political group in the Philippine Islands are asking for independence. Suppose the Lord Mayor of London should officially receive a Filipino diplomatic representative, and sanction his cause by attending a public mass meeting and speaking in the interests of Filipino independence. Suppose a resolution should be introduced into Parliament calling for an investigation of American rule in the Philippines. Suppose that societies should spring up all over England for the purpose of raising money for the financing of the mutinous Filipino government. What reaction might be expected in America? Doubtless we would say to England, "You attend to your own affairs and we will at-

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tend to ours. The Irish problem is yours, the Filipino problem is ours."

Sinn Fein comes to America pleading for assistance in the name of democracy but when the liberties of the world were at stake and American soldiers were being hurried across the Atlantic in defense of democracy that portion of Ireland which was ruled by Sinn Fein was conniving with the enemies of democracy and doing all possible to ensure the success of the submarines which menaced the lives of our soldiers. Once that they were landed in Irish ports and camps the American soldiers were subjected to almost constant annoyances and insults. The evidence of the unpopularity of American troops in Sinn Fein Ireland is too convincing to be forgotten now that the war is over and Sinn Fein is pleading for funds for her cause!

Can America afford to be drawn into a controversy where the claims on her sympathy rest on such dubious grounds? If Sinn Fein can convince the world that she is another Armenia, Poland, Belgium or Serbia bleeding with wounds received in an honorable warfare for a great principle then the American conscience should speak in no uncertain tones. But when Irish savings banks are bulging with hundreds of millions of dollars in war

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savings while American capital is being sought through Irish bonds; when Ireland's sons walk the lanes and highways of Ireland unmaimed except in night prowls, street brawls with the police, or treacherous raids; when the rights and liberties assured her by the governing power give her an administration that is the envy of three-fourths the population of Europe; then American sympathy may well be given with extreme caution.

Not many months ago the author made a short trip across the American border into Canada. A twenty mile drive into the Dominion brought him to a town of some three thousand people. He walked under the British flag flying from the post office, transacted business with the commercial establishments of the town, offered American money in exchange for his purchases, and drove out of the little town and back into the States without a word of protest or molestation from any citizen or official. At the point where the road crossed the border line there stood an iron post with the words "The United States" on one side and "Canada" on the other. Near the base of that iron shaft, not six feet high, appeared a sentence stating that this was the boundary line fixed between Canada and the United States by treaty.

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Looking to the east and west across the prairies one could see for many miles yet in all that distance there was not visible a single soldier, cannon, guard, fort or blockhouse. That iron shaft was the only mark! It is to the glory and for the pride of America and Canada that for more than one hundred years a boundary line nearly two thousand mile long has remained without military defense or dispute! Let America meddle with the Irish Question, arouse the animosity of England and possibly engage in a dispute that could lead to war and that boundary will be lined with trenches, machine guns, poison gas and all the materials of war. Is that what America wants? If not, then let us keep at least officially out of the Irish muddle until it has been submitted to America for arbitrement. In other words, **let us attend to our own business!**

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